

**To:** PARC

**Sub:** Parkland Acquisition Criteria

**Date:** March 11, 2015

**From:** Parkland Acquisition Criteria Subcommittee

Larry Baron

Bill James

Pradeep Parmar

## **Overview**

The Los Altos Parks Plan was adopted by City Council in March 2012. The number one long-term goal is to provide a park in north Los Altos. Additionally, a citywide goal is to look for opportunities to expand existing parks, listed in Appendix 1, where feasible. At the suggestion of City Council at the City Council/PARC Joint Meeting in 2014, PARC was asked to address Parkland Acquisition Criteria. This memo contains criteria and recommendations.

## **Discussion**

There are several factors to consider when evaluating a piece of land for the creation of a park, such as location, size, use, neighborhood impact, traffic considerations and more. See Appendix 2 for additional considerations.

However, the sub-committee considers the most important criteria to consider are location, size, and use, each of which is discussed more fully below.

The sub-committee also came up with a numerical scoring scheme based on these three criteria. The scheme and a recommendation as to how it should be used to evaluate land acquisition opportunities are described in the final section below.

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**Location:**

As can be seen by the map in Figure 1, there are no Parks north of Village Park downtown. Therefore, North Los Altos is a priority but all opportunities to acquire parkland or open space should be considered.

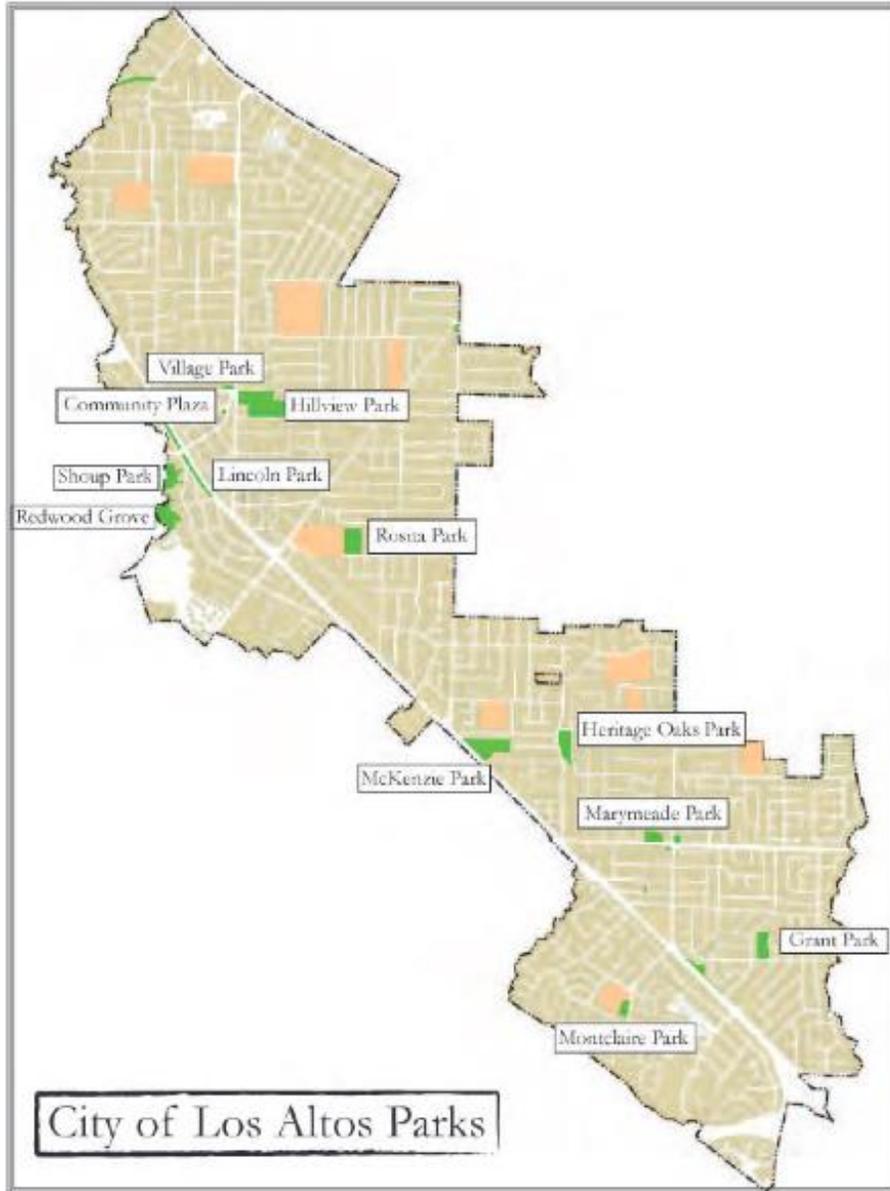


Figure 1

**Size:**

The Parks Plan shows that Los Altos park acreage is the lowest when compared to neighboring cities. See Appendix 3. Even small patches of land can be useful for alleviating this parkland deficit.

Any available land .75 acre or above should be considered for acquisition as open space or as a park. Any land below .75 acre should still be considered as an open space addition to the City.

**Use:**

A park that is more useful to more residents should logically be weighted higher.

**Evaluation Numerical Criteria:**

Table 1 shows the point scoring system to evaluate new parkland acquisition.

<b>Los Altos Parkland Acquisition Criteria Matrix</b>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>North Los Altos (points)</b>	<b>Other Los Altos (points)</b>
<b>Location</b>	4	1
<b>Size</b>		
.75 - 2 acres	1	1
2 - 4 acres	2	2
4 - 6+ acres	4	4
<b>Use</b>		
Passive	1	1
Medium Use	2	2
High Use with fields for team sports	4	4
<b>Total Points (higher is better)</b>		

Table 1

The sub-committee recommends that parcels that score at total of 3, 4, or 5 points should be considered as opportunities to add or preserve open space, and that parcels that score 6 points or above should be pursued as opportunities to develop as a park. The scoring may be useful in situations in which a choice has to be made among competing opportunities that happen to become available at the same time.

**Appendix 1: Existing Los Altos Parks (by size)**

<b>Park</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Community Plaza	0.16
Hetch Hetchy Trail	0.17
647 N. San Antonio Rd	0.50
Village Park	0.78
Montclair Park	1.10
Marymeade Park	2.47
Shoup Park	3.95
McKenzie Park	4.30
Lincoln Park	4.44
Grant Park	4.50
Rosita Park	5.00
Heritage Oaks Park	5.33
Redwood Grove	6.12
Hillview Park	6.63
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.45</b>

## **Appendix 2: Criteria for parkland acquisition**

- Location – North Los Altos is a priority but all opportunities to acquire parkland or open space should be considered
- Programming:
  - Does acquisition allow programming of team sports (softball, soccer, basketball) or tennis?
- Impact on neighborhood
- Is land reasonably attainable pricewise?
- Site condition
  - Flatness
  - Sewer available?
  - Potable water available?
  - Landscape water available?
  - Electrical power available?
  - Soil condition
  - Drainage
  - Existing vegetation
  - Structures present
- Accessibility
  - ADA
  - On site parking
  - Pedestrian access
- Cost of improvements
- Cost of annual maintenance
- Existing zoning
- Any adverse environmental conditions present (e.g. air pollution, noise)
- Any relationship or connection to other community services, location, trails or schools

**Appendix 3: Park Acreage Comparison, Excerpted from Los Altos Parks Plan, May 8, 2012, Page 4**

**PARK ACREAGE COMPARISON**

Compared to similar, regional cities, Los Altos has a low park acreage ratio. Per 1,000 residents, Los Altos has approximately 1.57 acres of dedicated parkland.

	<b>Population<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Developed Parks Acreage</b>	<b>Park Acreage per 1,000 Residents</b>
San Carlos	28,406	143	5.03
Campbell <sup>2</sup>	39,349	132	3.35
Burlingame	28,806	94	3.26
Cupertino <sup>2</sup>	58,302	162	2.78
Mountain View <sup>2</sup>	74,066	187	2.52
Palo Alto	64,403	162	2.52
Saratoga	29,926	63	2.11
Menlo Park	32,026	54	1.69
<b>Los Altos</b>	<b>28,976</b>	<b>45.45</b>	<b>1.57</b>

<sup>1</sup> Based on 2010 Census

<sup>2</sup> Includes school sites under joint-use agreements